

Preface

In 1995, Dave Fabry, Lisa Potts and I published an article on the advantages provided by hearing aids having two perfectly matched omnidirectional microphones in comparison to their performance using only one microphone. The results revealed a mean improvement of around 7.5 dB in an ideal listening situation (signal in the front; noise directly behind) for the directional design (cardioid) used in the hearing aids. Since then, numerous studies have been published showing the advantages of dual-microphone designs in significantly improving the signal to noise ratio. Market surveys have also demonstrated that hearing aids with dual-microphone technology provide the greatest user satisfaction of any other hearing aid evaluated.

About two years ago (1997) I started preparing a manuscript on the topic of advances in microphone technology because this was an area I felt students and dispensing audiologists should be more aware. I started to prepare the manuscript, but professional and personal commitments arose that prevented me from completing it. These various commitments allowed me the following reflection that I would like to share.

I've come to realize that the adult life is like a three-legged stool where each leg represents eight hours of our day. One leg represents the eight hours spent in one's professional life. Another leg represents the eight hours spent in one's private/family life, while the remaining leg represents eight hours of sleep (personally, I only require five or six). In order for an individual to maintain a "balance" in his/her life, the "height" (i.e., importance) among the three legs has to be equal. If one devotes too much time to one leg or the other, then the height of the legs is not in balance and the individual is "off balance." Thus, life is a constant battle to adjust the height of each leg so that no one aspect is given more attention than the others. At one time, I was devoting too much attention to the "professional" leg and less attention to the other two. I felt "out of balance" and had to learn to adjust my priorities so that I spent as much time on my private life as I did with my professional life. Perhaps this life lesson will be of some benefit to the reader of this preface.

A year ago, Robert Sandlin called to see if I would be interested in contributing a chapter for the 2nd edition of his book *Handbook of Hearing Aid Amplification* that he was editing with Geary McCandless to be published by Singular Press. We tossed around a few ideas. Some of his ideas for topics were areas that I thought I was capable of providing some useful information, while others I thought could be better handled by others. He gave me a week or two to mull it over. Then I thought of the manuscript on advances in microphone technology that was gathering dust in my home office and asked if he felt this would be appropriate for his book. Robert was very kind and said that the topic would be timely and that I should proceed with its preparation.

Over the next three months, I worked very diligently to prepare as comprehensive and, at the same time, clinically applicable chapter that I could. When it was done, I asked Robert and Singular Press if I could publish the chapter in *Trends* because I felt the information would fit the goals for *Trends*. In addition, I felt the number of readers likely to receive this information would be greater if published in *Trends* because the number of subscribers to *Trends* is greater than the number of copies typically purchased for any single textbook. Fortunately, Robert and Singular Press agreed to allow *Trends* to publish this chapter.

I am indebted to Robert Sandlin, Geary McCandless and Singular Press for allowing me to publish the information included in this issue of *Trends*. The reader is urged to contact Singular Press (800-521-8545) to determine when the *Handbook of Hearing Aid Amplification (2nd Edition)* will be published.

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